A

SERMON

Preached at the

Visitation

OF

The Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN

Lord Bishop of CHESTER,

AT

CHESTER.

By JAMES ARDERNE, DD.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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CHESTER.

2 Tim. iv. 5. latter part of the Verſe.

Make full proof of thy Miniſtry.

THeſe words are the ſumming up of all thoſe advices in general terms which St. *Paul* had more diſtinctly given before in this and the former Epiſtle to *Timothy*.

Theſe particulars, as we find them in both, will moſt ſutably become the matter of this days diſcourſe. And I hope tho both the Text and this Aſſembly would fairly allow us to ſhew, that *Timothy* was a Dioceſan Biſhop, yet it will not be reckon'd neceſſary, ſince the Authority of St. *Ignatius*'s Epiſtles hath been beyond all juſt exception fully vindicated; and that other the ancienteſt Records of Church-affairs do prove Biſhop and Prieſt to be not meerly two Degrees, but likewiſe two Ranks of Clergy-men, diſtinguiſh'd by different Ordinations and Powers, as appears amongſt ſeveral Writings from the Apoſtolick Canons, which I take the freedom to urge by this Name, be-

cause they were called so before the first General Council of the Church, and are referred to by it, and have expressly this Title given by that of *Ephesus*, which was one of the four principal Councils. But to return to the propounded work, the Advices given to *Timothy*, which concern all who are plac'd in the Ministry, may be brought under these four heads:

1. To keep out of our Religion whatever is new.
2. To improve in Divine knowledg.
3. To be diligent in all Offices of the received Ministry.
4. To have a Conversation sutable to their Office.

1. To keep out of our Religion whatever is new.

Our Religion is the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ; therefore sutable both to Christ, and to every other Eternal; it should be the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. It being at once, and at first perfect, any alteration or addition would utterly spoil it. Hence is it that St. *Paul* bids *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3, to charge some that they teach no other Doctrine, and *ch.* 4. *v.* 6, that he should put the Brethren in remembrance like a good Minister of Jesus Christ, of the words of Faith and good Doctrine; and *ch.* 6. *v.* 3, that he should so teach

and

and exhort, that if it might be, not any man might teach otherwise, but consent to wholesome words; more directions of the same nature you may read in this second Epistle, as *ch.* 1. 13. of *holding fast the form of sound words*; of *committing the Apostles Doctrine to faithful Teachers of others*, *ch.* 2. 2. the like charge is given to *Titus*, *ch.* 2. 1. and 7. and so before, *ch.* 1. 9.

Now being new things made part of Religion do plainly destroy the rest of it, let us inquire awhile whence such innovations arise, and how they betray themselves, and how they are most popularly carried on; they rise from the same Original whence wars come, from the lusts within men, from vain-glory very oft, and from an ambitious desire of drawing Disciples after them, so the old Canon Law defines at once a Heretick and a Schismatick to be such, who for the sake of vain-glory either makes or follows false opinions. Such the *Gnosticks*, were men vainly puft up in their fleshly minds, professing themselves to be wise; such an one *Novatus* was, as *Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome* gives an account of him to *Fabius* of *Antioch*, *That he was lifted up with arrogance, and that his ambition and longing for a Bishoprick was the cause of his separation.* The Heresie of *Marcion*, as we learn from *Tertullian* and *Epiphanius*, sprang from another as bad ground, to wit, from revenge, because the *Roman* Church

Euseb. hist. l. 6. cap. 43.

Tertul. de præscript. *Epiphan.* li. hæres. 42.

Church was then more strict and modest, and judg'd it unlawful to receive him into its Communion, who had been excommunicated by his own Father, a Bishop in *Pontus*, for foul conversation with a woman of that City. Sometimes Divinity-inventions are studied out of covetousness, so *Simon* thought to buy the gift of Healing, that he might be a good gainer by his practice. And as to the present state of the Church of *Rome*, whose innovations are much more modern than any I have yet nam'd, if we survey the main differences 'twixt them and us, and compute the large revenues thence arising to their Churchmen, we should think, if their opinions had been old enough, that they came rather from this *Simon* than from St. *Peter*. If it were not tedious to you to hear what already you fully know, it would be easie to shew a like beginning of all new whims and fashions of deceivers; for though it were uncharitable to question, but that some may follow a Heresie or Schism, as some follow'd *Absoloms* rebellion, in their simplicity, and knew not any thing; yet it would be charity mistaken to believe, that this simplicity and ignorance could furnish out a Leader, that sets up his Banner in defiance of the Church; no certainly, this requires some endowments, like those of a fal'n Angel fighting against Heaven, a good understanding and an ill purpose.

Such men do usually betray themselves, and shew

shew that they are setting up a new Doctrine, when they quarrel with the words us'd by the Church; so the *Arrians*, when they were suspected, alledg'd that they were only offended with the word ὁμοούσιον, fearing lest it favoured *Sabellius*, who taught that there was but one Person and three Manifestations in the Godhead; and the *Socinians*, when they first fram'd into a body like a Church, pretended they did not find fault with the Doctrine concerning Christ and the Holy Ghost, but only with the barbarous School-term *Trinity*; but for all their simpering, both these enemies of God appear'd afterwards bare-fac'd in their own colours; the like may be observ'd in those who design an alteration in Discipline, as these other did in Doctrine. If you knew not the men, and their communication, you would take them to be harmless and tender, but history and experience acquaint us, by what has been, that they are not like other dealers, for that they will have more than they ask. Another way whereby men discover an inclination to something foreign to the Church of which they appear Members, is, when they would compound with the Church, that which were all along Articles of Religion, should now be only Articles of Peace; and what was look'd upon formerly to be believ'd, should be only not publickly oppos'd; but this project has too many mischiefs surely ever to obtain success; it would

cast a mighty Reproach upon our first Restorers, and it would make us one, just as the Interim made the dissenting *Germans*, not in Religion, but as then it was fitly call'd, an Interreligion. And further, seeing our Doctrines are plainly contain'd in our Devotions, it would make these men, who are both for Dissention and Peace, the very worst of Hypocrites.

Having now given you some account of the original and tokens of Innovation, it remains we consider the fairest Pleas on whose credit the man excepts against what is well established; these are chiefly two:

1. That what has hitherto been receiv'd in the Church, is contrary to the Rules of Reason. Or,

2. Contrary to the enlight'ning of the Spirit.

1. Contrary to the Rules of Reason. It was indeed never denied of reason, by those who might be suppos'd to have some share of it, that it was very serviceable about Religion, and it is yeilded among us, that it could never find so creditable employment as in defending that of Christians; but there is a wide difference betwixt Instrument and Contriver, betwixt Service and Authority. Reason was very useful in discovering the honesty and infallibility of the first Publishers of the Christian Doctrine; but then it has no right to take the Doctrines asunder, and to make an exact search whether these agree to those apprehensions of things

things which flow from the alone light of Nature, and to order that as the Doctrines shall approve themselves upon this trial, suitably their success shall be either to be entertain'd or rejected; no, certainly the Laws of God do not so doubtfully depend upon the sentence of our faculties, nor is the Scripture a fair proposal only that may probably be receiv'd, if we approve the matter of it. All the power of debate, and that is fully enough, which God gives to our reason, antecedent to our belief, is this, to examine the miracles wrought in confirmation of our faith, and so to consider whether these, and consequently the Gospel which accompanies 'em, can proceed from any one but the most High God; and after this hearing is over, reason changes its person, it lays down all its Ensigns of Jurisdiction, descends from its Judgment-seat, and does homage to this Vicegerent come from Heaven, professing an entire obedience to its Authority; and afterwards if it be found that some of these Laws so Divinely authorized, shall appear capable of two meanings, or of none that is plain to us, reason is not to take this advantage for an excuse to restore it self to its former power, but it must go to consult with those who convers'd familiarly face to face with the Publishers of this Law, or with their nearest Successors, to know what interpretation they receiv'd of this dark saying, or what Doctrines were deliver'd them nearest the possi-

ble meaning of this place, and so it believes according to their true report. This is in a manner the whole process of the Knowledg and of the Faith of Christianity; and he who will attribute to reason an employment higher than this, must be requested to tell us, how by reason he arrived at the belief of the Trinity, and of other mysteries of the Christian Faith. If he say, that he has as distinct a conception of these, as of any self-evident proposition, we congratulate his early attainments and his being already wrapt up into Heaven; but if his free answer prove, as we may well suspect, quite contrary, that for his part he does not at all believe these things, because he cannot clearly understand 'em, and that Christian Religion has nothing in it, but what is plain and easie to conceive, it will be expected in the next place he shew, after these incomprehensible propositions are laid aside, what so difficult truths there are in our Religion, more than were in the world before; that it should be worthy of God to make a man on purpose, in such a wonderful manner to preach them, and to communicate to him his own power to do those mighty works, that men might believe on this score that which mankind believ'd long afore by the light of Nature. Thus, as the argument deriv'd from divine Revelation and the strange attendents of it, proves that more was requir'd to be believ'd than reason could suggest; so we shall find, if we look into Scripture, that it pro-

fesses to contain more than human reason, even after the revelation given, can fully conceive.

2. Some plead in behalf of their novelties, that they proceed from the enlight'ning of the Spirit. They apply hither those promises of the Old Testament made concerning the latter days, whereas those latter days are by St. *Peter* understood of the days of the Apostles preaching, and so they were applied by the primitive Church in opposition to the Enthusiasm of *Montanus* and his fellows. We acknowledg sufficient aids of the Spirit of Grace in the use of means, but we say it does not give this knowledg by inspiration in our days; this extraordinary grant being formerly accompanied with the gift of strange tongues, and with that of working of Miracles, these two, or the like, being necessary to go along with that Spirit which distinguishes the Divinely inspired from the pretending Impostor.

Having said thus much concerning Innovations, let me further dissuade you from them; consider that what is of the greatest standing and continuance is truth it self; truth is that which is eternal in God, and among men it is the off-spring of Divine perfection; whereas error is modern and an upstart; thus was it with the Idolatry of the *Jews*, they serv'd new Gods, newly come up. In the stile of Scripture, the Ancient People signifies the same with the true Church; and the good way and the old way are one and the same. Our Saviour. Deut. 2.19

our makes this the best trial of Doctrine, whether it be true or no, by seeing whether it was so from the beginning. The *Jews* are directed in matters of Religion, to consider the years of many Generations; *ask thy Fathers and they will tell thee, thy Elders and they will shew thee*; the whole Church in all ages is but one Flock, and we that come after, must as *Solomon* bids, observe the steps of the old Flock. The first Christian Church is that Pillar of truth on which Divine Laws were affix'd, that they might be made publick; whom may we then with better success follow than those whose bright knowledge of what they taught was not sullied with lusts, nor swol'n with arrogance, nor envenomed with malice? How can we suspect their evidence, who knew God's will by doing it, and who rather chose to dye than betray their Faith given to God, or the Faith delivered to them. Blessed Saints!

The second Advice of St. *Paul* is to improve in knowledg.

He would not that they who are Teachers should not understand what they say, *Eph.* 1. 7. Nor would he a Teacher should only begin to understand, so *ch.* 3. Not a Novice, lest he be filled with pride. But instead hereof, one who hath well studied his work, 1 *Ep. ch.* 2. 15. *Study to shew thy self approved to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Of all knowledg most principally the knowledg

of

of Scripture is required; this *Timothy* had from a Child, which at this day many who profeſs themſelves great Divines do ſcarce at all regard. So the Hiſtory of the Council of *Trent* tells us of the *Italian* Prelates, that they were good School-Divines, but underſtood little of Scripture. We ſhould as the *Rarræi* among the *Jews*, cleave only to the Doctrines of Scripture, and exerciſe our ſelves herein continually, over and over again. So the *Jews*, to intimate ſo much upon the eight day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, read at the ſame time the laſt Section of the Law, and with it the beginning of the firſt. We ſhould be unwearied in this frequent reading, as it is reported of one who when he had read a Book of *Ariſtotle* forty times over, wrote upon it, I will read it again; by doing thus we ſhall daily grow in knowledg. For ſuch is the excellency of every Word of God, and ſuch is the narrowneſs of our underſtandings at that end where we receive knowledg, that though our Souls are made capable of much knowledg, yet we cannot receive much at once. What has been ſaid of improving in Scripture-knowledg, concerns all men as well as Miniſters, ſeeing the reaſons given in Scripture why it ſhould be ſearch'd, reaches all; but there is a modeſty to be us'd, as ſenſible they are more likely to be miſtaken now and then about its meaning, than thoſe whoſe whole ſtudy and buſineſs it is to make it be underſtood. But all have an undoubted

right

Stromat. l. 7. right to the use of Scripture. *Clemens Alexandrinus* * advises all Christians, to *grow old in reading these Books*, and adds, that *as under the Law those Beasts which chew'd the cud, and had parted hoofs were acceptable to God; so is the Christian who ruminates upon the Oracles of God day and night, whence in his going by Faith to the Father and the Son, he receives that steadiness of gate which proceeds from parted hoofs*, thus far he. Many more passages of the like nature are met with among the Fathers, which we must now forbear. But as for those who are separated to the work of the Ministry, more is required than reading Scripture and Divinity in *English*, the knowledg of Tongues, and of the true state of the primitive Church; this must be had from an entire reading of the ancient Records of the Church, that we may not be deceived with false representations under that perswading title; and human Learning must be retain'd into the service of Christian knowledg, many parts of it are of necessary use, and almost all give a good advantage to our discourses; these secular disciplines were recommended by several, but most fully by *Clemens Alexandrinus* *, his Scholar in *Origen* *, and are to good purpose used by most of them. These accomplishments are helpful in the two great works of our Ministry, to wit, instructing the ignorant, and convincing gain-sayers, which comes under the next advice of St. *Paul*, which is,

Stromat. 6. 3 Tom. in Genes.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, A Diligence in Ministerial duties. Our duty has three main parts, Teaching, Praying, and Watching over the People.

These being undoubtedly necessary, we need not enquire which is of the greatest dignity. As to Teaching, St. *Paul* requires one *apt to teach*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 24. and that he be *instant in preaching the word*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. he must instruct with much plainness, and not make the Gospel to return to the likeness of the Law, with a veil and thick darkness about it; he must exhort with all heartiness, by the fittest true arguments of perswasion; he must both boldly and meekly reprove sin, not sparing the fault, but still manifesting he has no quarrel with the person. In short, in all the instances of *teaching* there must appear what St. *Paul* requires from *Titus*, *ch.* 2. 7. *uncorruptness*, *gravity*, *sincerity*.

2. The second part of duty is Prayer. Thus the Ministers of the Lord are to cry, *Spare thy people*, *O Lord*. This work at this time, when Knowledg is more plentifully found than Living well, is of the more general usefulness; and as the profession of the same Articles of Faith in the very same express terms, is a mark of Communion among the distinct Assemblies of the Church, so praying unto God in the same words, in our several Congregations, shews that we are not independent, but members one of another. Such were the primitive Prayers, *Justin Martyr* speaks of, their ὑχαὶ κοιναὶ, their 2. *Apolog.*

Common Prayer, and *Origen* of their εὐχαὶ προσταχθεῖσαι, their *appointed Prayers*; and we have greater examples, of *John the Baptist* and of our Saviour, teaching the Disciples to pray in set words. As the publick prayers of the first Christians had appointed words, so likewise they had Times and Places appointed. Of both these St. *Clemens*, the fellow-labourer of St. *Paul*, speaks, * telling us, that *our Lord would not have holy Offices performed rashly, nor disorderly, but in determinate places and hours, where and by whom he would have these done, he hath appointed by his Sovereign will.* Several others of them speak to the same purpose; and *Eusebius* acquaints us, that these Houses of Prayer were consecrated. Which I the rather mention, to remedy the mistake of those who count it Popish, when-as indeed it was done in the purest Ages of Christianity. So much for the place; as for the Hours they were thrice a day, and the day of the most publick Assembly was that which we rightly call the Lords day; of this St. *Barnabas*, the Companion of St. *Paul*, speaks *, *we keep* (saith he) *with gladness of mind that day on which Jesus both rose from the dead, and appeared, and ascended into Heaven.* What has been said of Prayers, why they should be the same, holds as strongly for the administration of Sacraments in the same words and manner; for these, besides the benefits by them received from God, are tokens of an agreement among

1 *Ep. Corinth.*

Προσευκτηρίων Ἀριερώσεις Hist. l. 10. c. 3.

Ep. Catholic.

among our selves; for as right Baptism at large is a fixing the person in the Catholick Church, so in order to his being joined more immediately to a branch of the Catholick Church, the same form of Baptism which this particular one uses, is required. The like is to be said of the Lords Supper, it is not only a sign of our Communion with Christ, but of our Communion with the whole true Church upon Earth, where the necessaries of administration are observ'd; and when we practise in this the same allowable differences, we manifest as by the necessaries that we are of the universal, so by these allowable differences that we are more immediately of this or that particular Church, and that (in the phrase of St. *Paul*,) *we being many are one.*

The third instance of diligence is a subordinate watching over the People. I call it a subordinate watching, because watching implies a care joyn'd with authority, and neither of them originally in the Presbyter, but the care assign'd, and the authority permitted by the superior order. The primitive Church call'd Presbyters, which in our *English* abridgment of the word is Priests, * *the sacred Officers of the second Throne*. These St. *Ignatius* tells us *, might do nothing without the Bishop; but on the other hand, it needs not now move any doubt what St. *Cyprian* writes *, that he did nothing without his Presbyters. No more do our Bishops, when they only execute those Ca-

δευτέρα θρόνα ἱερεῖς, *Euseb.* hist. l. 10. c. 5.

Ignat. Ep. ad trall.

nons made by our Provincial Councils, of which the Presbyters are a part. The care over the people is exercised in private and personal reproving, comforting, instructing, reconciling, and the rest as they become necessary; and since the ill times make it highly so, in warning them to beware of separation from the Church; of this the Apostles and their Successors took the greatest care that the people should not severally entertain opposite Teachers, nor forget the assembling of themselves together, and they reckon'd to them Schism equal to the most scandalous and destructive sins. To this matter St. *Barnabas* speaks thus *, *Epist. Catholi.* *ye ought not to draw your selves apart, as if ye were justified, for the Scripture saith* (quoting Isa. 5. 22.) *wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* The same dissuasive is the main design of St. *Clemens*'s Epistles, and of almost all of St. *Ignatius*, but most largely the empty pleas for separation are confuted by St. *Cyprian* *, and the aggravation and future punishment thereof is display'd by St. *Irenæus* *. We must likewise warn an indifferent sort of people, that come both to our publick Assemblies and to those set up through a dislike taken causlesly against our Church; it is no light matter left at discretion to joyn either to one or other; we never find that the right Christians went to the Assemblies of the *Montanists*, though *Tertullian*, who too well knew them, vouches

* l. 3 *Epist.* 3.
* l. 4. c. 62.

that

that they were orthodox in Doctrine *, only differing in ſome points of Diſcipline. We can no more belong both to the Church and adverſe Meeting, than we can ſerve two Maſters; to this purpoſe there is an old Canon * that by the ſixth General Council is reckon'd Apoſtolick *, that he that prays with them in the Conventicles ſet up againſt the Church, ſhall be deprived of the Churches Communion.

* *Non aliquam fidei aut ſpei regulum evertunt* Tertul. *adverſ.* Phychicos.

* *Canon Apoſtol.* 63. *Concil.* Conſtantinopels 4. *Can.* 2.

The fourth and laſt advice of St. *Paul*, is to have a converſation ſutable to the Miniſterial Office. We muſt have a converſation which becomes the Goſpel which we preach. St. *Paul* requires, that we follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs, 1 *Tim.* 6. 11. and the like advice, 2 *Ep.* 2. 22. and to *Titus*, 2. 7. that in all things he ſhew himſelf a pattern of good works; when he ſays a pattern, he means not any thing in our converſation, wherein no one is bound to imitate us, but in every Moral duty, as belonging to all men, a Miniſter is bound to be firſt, and moſt remarkable. As we are to be patterns to others, ſo we muſt take thoſe that have gone before for ours. It was ſaid by our Saviour of the *Baptiſt*, that he was a *burning and a ſhining light*; the common gloſs ſhould teach us, he burn'd in his zeal, and ſhin'd in his example; it is not only he that Teaches, but who likewiſe does that ſhall be call'd Great in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a commendation given of *Origen*, that his doctrine and his manners did agree;

and

and of *Nazianzen*, that he never gave in charge to his Scholars any thing which he had not first practis'd upon himself. It is certain that all men are drawn more readily by examples than by fine sayings; and are like Soldiers, who more chearfully follow their Commander than his bare Commands. A good life makes a Preacher not only better heard, but to understand better; if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of his doctrine, for *the secrets of the Lord are with those that fear him*; and the *Schechinah* (say the *Jews*) was not afforded but to the best of men. Real goodness gives a sense and tast upon our minds of what we recommend to others; and the good counsel we give, being wrought and pointed in our Hearts, pierces further into our Hearers. By our living soberly, righteously, and godlily, men will be assured that when we perswade them to the same duties we are in good earnest, and that we do not meerly preach these things, as customary and expected, or as pretty clean speculation, but as our and their Duty, as a practical truth, and as such which is not only requir'd but possible; by this means we shall gain both an esteem and success to our Ministry, when our actions do not shame our speech, when our Hearers cannot whisper, why Does he not what he Says? To conclude now with the exhortation of St. *Peter* applied to our purpose, *Let us have our conversation honest amongst men, that when they speak a-*

gainst

gainſt us as evil doers, they may by our good works, which they ſhall behold, glorifie God. To whom, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons, and one God, be all Honour given for ever more.

The End.

ERRATA.

Page 10. line 24. r. 1 *Ep.* pag. 11. l. 7. r. *Karræi.*
pag. 12. l. 27. *dele* in.

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